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Shift/Work: Speculations

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THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
Edinburgh College of Art

Practice Outputs

Prof Neil Mulholland
School of Art, Edinburgh
College of Art
Shift/Work: Speculations
Composition
March-October 2017

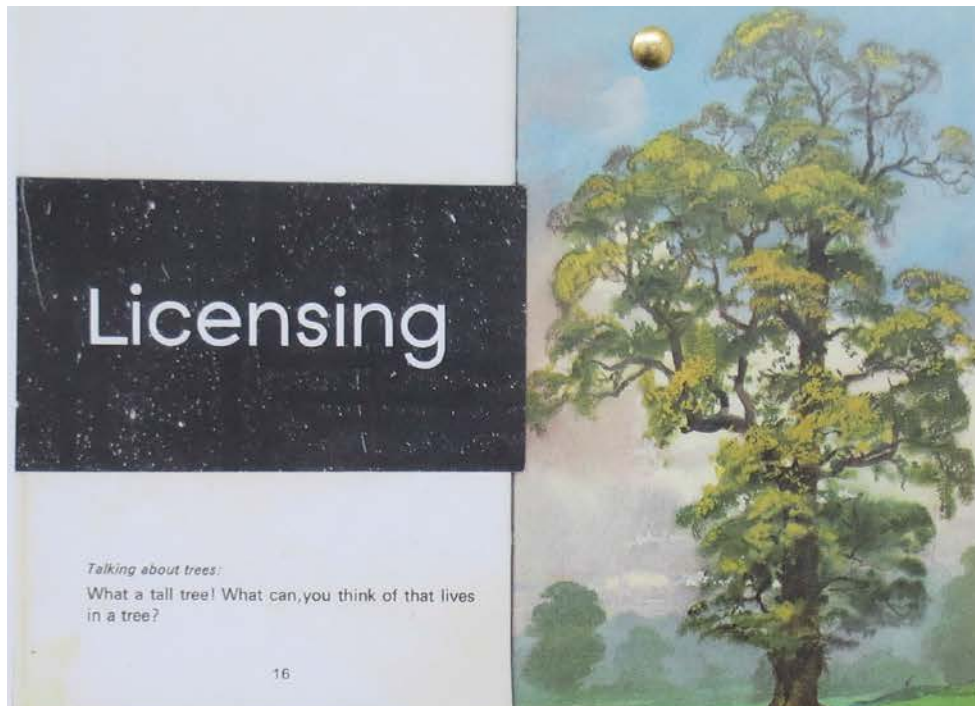
Prof Neil Mulholland
School of Art, Edinburgh
College of Art, College
of Arts, Humanities &
Social Sciences

Output Name:

Shift/Work:
Speculations

Date: March-October
2017

Visual record of output



Section 01 Output

Shift/Work: Speculations is a participatory workshop composition performed at the Kochi-Muziris Biennale in India (22-23 March 2017) and at the Kristiansand Theatre, University of Agder, Norway (28-30 August 2017). *Shift/Work: Speculations* was collectively composed by 12 Shift/Workers at Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop (3-4 March 2017). The workshop score was presented and published as an Open Educational Resource (OER) at ISSoTL17 in Calgary (12 & 14 Oct 2017) and on shift-work.org.uk

Shift/Work is studio that composes workshops that cause participants to reflect upon and recalibrate the processes of artistic research. Key to this is an open engagement with practice (work) as a means of both generating and transferring new knowledge (shift). Our workshops enact new practices and collectively compose OERs for artists, art professionals, curators and art educators to adapt and implement. 'Shift/Work' is an iterative process, a rolling workshop that can be continually re-performed like a musical score.

Speculations participants develop, learn and apply speculative methods, processes and practices - forms of emergence that cannot be held, observed or enacted without taking risks or experiencing their consequences.

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Section 02

Originality: New Knowledge

'Speculation' is a unifying ethics (or cognitive bias) in artistic research (AR) commonly expressed as 'without a script' or 'not knowing'. Drawing explicit attention to an implicit ethics within AR, and exposing it to the scrutiny and practices of non-artistic learners, raises awareness of its operations and limitations. This, in turn, enables us to repurpose, invent and practice metacognitive forms of speculation that have operational significance for, and beyond, AR.

AR is limited by its focus on personalised ontology. Since it's predicated on a liberal construction of self-hood, monotechnic this focus is proprietary, authoritative and linear. AR's vision of self-hood invites 'systems failure' due to being an unachievable objective.

Shift/Work: Speculations establishes a collective ontology for art practice through a paralogy in which participants compose and play-test workshops for one another. *Speculations* is an original contribution to artistic knowledge, art andragogy and artistic research that implements emerging methods in paralogy and pioneers SoTL (Scholarship of Teaching & Learning) in art. A theoretically reflexive, participatory, and openly accessible paralogy for AR, *Speculations* liberates artistic knowledges by common-ing the proprietary 'secret skills' of the monotechanical 'guild-school'.

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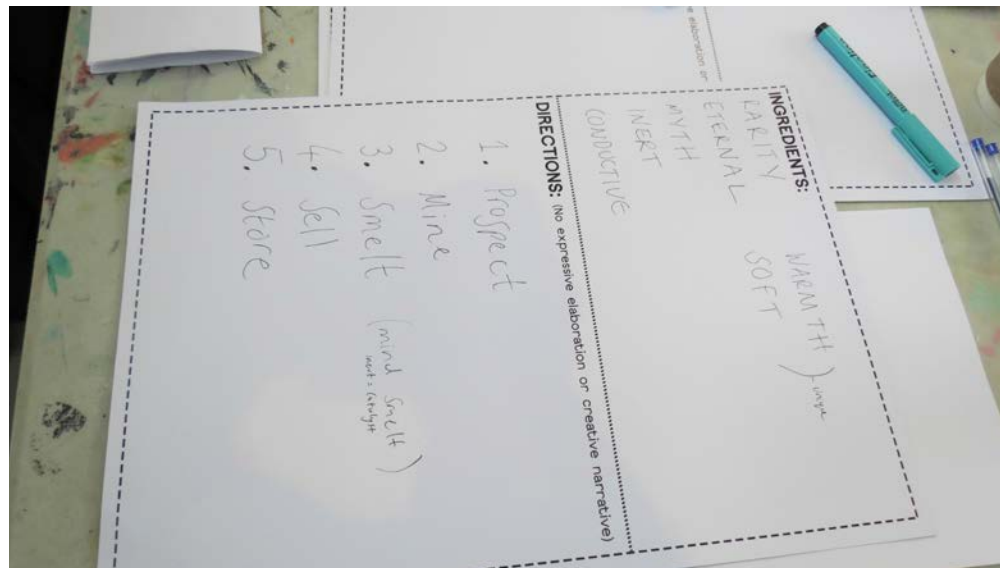
Section 03

Rigour: a rigorous process of investigation

Shift/Work: Speculations is an innovative methodology that synthesises practice-based and practice-led research methods to transform our understanding and knowledge of AR. It develops powerful insights into how P2P methods transmute speculative artistic practices by coupling the taking of risks with experiencing their consequences.

Shift/Work: Speculations is a scholarly, coherent, iterative system of meta-cognitive peer review. Composition is scaffolded with an academic and artistic community of 'Shift/Workers'. Shift/Workers compose and play-test each other's workshop scores before calibrating them through collective peer-review. Scores are then re-performed, iteratively, at international peer-reviewed artistic and scholarly events.

Speculations combines new theories of pedagogy with SoTL and Participatory Action Research (PAR) methods to develop and enhance a metacognitive understanding of artistic research. Through this, it invents a new theoretical framework - the 'paratechnic' - a means to collectively 'score' and disseminate artistic research as an OER. This is of particular importance to widening participation in the arts and restoring their civic purpose.



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Section 04

Significance: effective sharing

Shift/Workshops are composed and disseminated by being performed. Playing the score leads to it being re-calibrated for future performances.

At ESW, three 'branch' scores were composed to be performed in Kochi (22-23 March 2017) and at the Kristiansand Theatre, University of Agder, Norway (28-20 Aug 2017) producing further branch scores. A SoTL analysis of *Speculations* was presented at ISSoTL17 in Calgary, October 2017. Recalibrated through intense peer-review, a 'Scroll Score' of the generative composition to date was published as an OER for ISSoTL17 (12 & 14 Oct 2017) and published on shift-work.org.uk

Generative *Shift/Work* composition activates material probes as autopoietic catalysts for problem creation. As component interactions make radically distinct objects from the same material, speculation enables Shift/Workers to formulate the concepts, equipment, and techniques to generate the truly collaborative ability to fabricate common research objects.

Speculations has broad political, ontological and epistemological significance. Establishing a collective ontology for art practice through paralogy, *Speculations* exemplifies collectivist whole-systems thinking. Speculative research methods recognise that art is a subsystem of society - rather than separate from it - and ensure it has a pragmatic sense of its transformative potential.

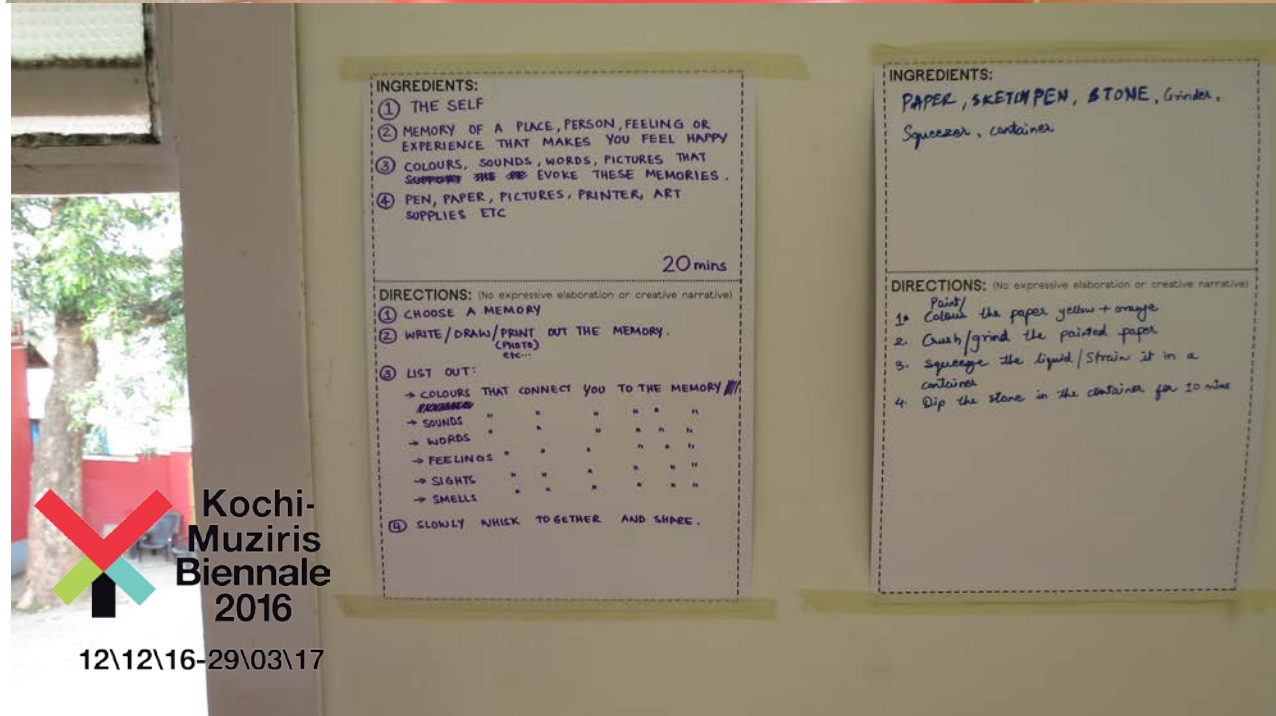
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Kochi-
Muziris
Biennale
2016

12\12\16-29\03\17

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Speculations



ShareAlike



The Board's Game

The Board's Game enables ShiftWorkers to sculpt and create a shared ontology for speculative probes by reverse engineering their perceptions of board games; ShiftWorkers individually speculate on possible board game mechanics through sculpting a game piece. As an artefactual outcome of practice-based research, a thing that demonstrates, embodies and delimits the maker's p-space. By order to collectively narrate a mechanics that encompasses all of their pieces (Board as collective noun). The Board's Game asks participants to produce a form of speculative creative work.

1. Guided Meditation on Board Game (imagining your own board game) (10mins)
2. Cover yourself or hide from the others in your group. Model a playing piece for your game
3. Convene with your group. Each player narrates their piece in relation to the mechanics of their speculative board game. (15mins)
4. Form a board of game designers; and formulate game rules that incorporate all the pieces made by your group in speculative play. (20mins)
5. Play-test the game, make adjustments. (15mins)


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for the SCHOLARSHIP of TEACHING and LEARNING

SPECULATIONS


1. Diverse and take part in a workshop that Speculation Speculation




2. Groups of Shift/Workers convene in three distinct spaces.




3. Each group picks 4 playing cards




4. Each group picks 6 probes




5. Turn card #1... use it to practice speculation with the probes




6. Turn card #2... speculate...




7. ...Card #3... Speculate...




8. ...Card #4... Speculate...




9. ...Card #5... Speculate...




10. Jigsaw discussion: compare a Speculations workshop




11. Playtest all elements of the workshop




12. Re-evaluate and refine



13. Share the workshop



14. Play the Speculations Series



Supported by:

Figs.

Composed- Performed:

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p1 & p5 Jake
Watts (design)
*Speculations
Cards* (A3 Print
OER)

p2 & p3. *Shift/
Work:
Speculations
composition
ESW* (March
2017)

p4. Jake Watts
(design)
Speculations Dice
(3D Print OER)

p4. Jake Watts
(design) *Recipe
Template* (Print
OER)

p6. Neil
Mulholland
(photos)
*Speculations Kochi
Biennale* (March
2017)

p7. Neil
Mulholland
(photos)
*Speculations
Kristiansand*
(August 2017)

p8 (top) Neil
Mulholland
(design)
*Speculations
Pamphlet for
ISSoTL17,
Calgary* (A6
Print OER)

p8 (bottom)
Andrew Gannon
(design)
*Speculations Scroll
Score for
ISSoTL17,
Calgary* (Print
OER)

p10 Jake Watts
(design) *Poster
for Speculations*
(A3 Print OER)

12 and 14 October
2017 Mulholland, N.
*Shift/Work:
Speculations,
International
Society for the
Scholarship of
Learning &
Teaching* 17, Calgary,
Canada

28-30 Aug 2017
Mulholland, N. *Shift/
Work: Speculations,
School of Arts,
Teateret, Agder
University,
Kristiansand,
Norway*

22-23 March 2017
*Shift/Work:
Speculations Kochi-
Muziris Biennale,
Fort Kochi, India*

3-4 March 2017
*Shift/Work:
Speculations
Edinburgh
Sculpture
Workshop,
Scotland*

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